

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the background of the study that describes the issue raised in the study and the movie used as the object for analyzing the issue. Besides, it also consists of the problem statement, the objectives of the study, and the benefits of the study arranged by the writer.

A. Background of the Study

Film is a product of culture based on how it depicts cultural attitudes, trends, and concerns. Film is a medium of communication that contains culture which is presented in the form of moving images. In the process of making it, film also refers to the background and culture of the filmmakers. Sounds and images in the films, apart from containing cultural elements, also contain elements of entertainment and information that can be used as tools in the realms of politics, education, natural beauty, and religion. Then, in culture, it is also influenced by the role of the media in the dissemination of information. Media has an important role to present information that contains a reality. Therefore, film is related to culture because it is one of the media that presents information in the form of signs or elements of a culture (Puspasari et al., 2020).

Film also takes on a role in American culture. In the 1890s to 1920s, American culture experienced a period of industrialization in which people from agriculture moved to industrial production. At the same time, film and other media of communication developed. The messages in it, customs, speech, and behavior spread throughout the regions of the country. Film and other media are influential in creating a more homogeneous and standardized culture. In 1911, Vitagraph's *The Motion Picture Magazine* was published in America which presented the concept of film stars in the American imagination. American identity and myth become represented through film. (University of Minnesota, n.d.). By the early 1930s, American film had consolidated its dominance on international screens. The history of film between 1932 and 1946 is the history of Hollywood. Hollywood is the product of American film. Many

craftspeople contributed to Hollywood cinema: directors, actors, cinematographers, writers, designers, and producers. Moreover, the conflict between an artist's sensibility and the classic mythic structures of the story types that were popular was what drove Hollywood film (Monaco, 1981).

Destin Daniel Cretton is a notable Asian-American film director, writer, and producer. *The Glass Castle* (2017), *I Am Not a Hipster* (2012), *Short Term 12* (2013), *Just Mercy* (2019), and *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* (2021) are among his most well-known films. Based on the films he has directed, Cretton seems for being concerned with the drama genre. Except for his Marvel film, all of his works are dramas with different conflicts such as *The Glass Castle* (2017), a biographical drama film about a girl who grows up in a dysfunctional family with financial problems. Further, *I Am Not a Hipster* (2012), a comedy-melodrama film on how to deal with family issues, loss, and love. Then, *Just Mercy* (2019), a film raised the issue of justice in the murder case.

Of all Cretton's films, the writer considers *Short Term 12* (2013) as the object of the study. *Short Term 12* is an American drama film written and directed by Destin Cretton. It tells the story of Grace, a woman in her 20s who worked as a supervisor at a facility home for troubled teens, called Short Term 12. The home functions as a treatment for the teenagers who have poor life backgrounds such as being neglected, mistreated, and even being abused. Grace and Mason, her boyfriend also her co-worker, and other supervisor took care of the teenagers' daily and focus on their recovery. Everyday Grace and others have to face various behavior of them even the worst ones. However, behind Grace's busy life taking care of the teenagers, she tends to ignore her true feelings and her condition, which is also as problematic as those teenagers. Until Jayden, a girl with a history of self-harm, joins the home facility, and reminds Grace of her problematic past experience.

In *Short Term 12*, the writer noticed the issue of anxiety experienced by Grace and other characters of the film. It is seen from the several scenes where they shows certain behaviors as a result of her anxiety. Anxiety is a feeling of

insecurity or discomfort when a person is unable to cope with certain objects or situations. Furthermore, people normally want to reduce anxiety. They naturally try to protect themselves from becoming anxious by employing defense strategies. The strategy is known as defense mechanisms. People usually and unconsciously use defense mechanisms in their daily life to reduce anxiety and to handle the situations they don't want it or accept it to happen.

The previous study conducted by Iswandari (2017) analyzed the types of anxiety experienced by Tri, the main character in *Divergent* film, and her usage of defense mechanisms. Tri is a woman with divergent genes who was depicted as a protagonist. The researcher identified the existence of anxiety and defense mechanisms in Tri, because the character is threatened by society's perception that she, as a divergent, is dangerous. Furthermore, a study conducted by Masykuroh (2017), also examined the types of anxiety and the use of defense mechanisms in the character of film. The researcher chose Will Hunting, the main character in the film *Good Will Hunting*, as the object of analysis because he experienced violence from his adoptive father and friends. Both previous studies used the theory of anxiety and defense mechanisms proposed by Sigmund Freud as the underlying theory in analyzing problems.

From the previous studies above, the writer also tries to analyze the anxiety and defense mechanisms of the film characters. However, the writer focuses on the causes of the characters' anxiety. In *Short Term 12* (2013), the causes of anxiety are described in more detail by mentioning situations in which the characters experience anxiety. In addition, as a novelty in the study, the writer does not only analyze the topic on the main character, but also on the other characters in the film that contain the topic being analyzed.

Anxiety and defense mechanisms are two of the theories proposed by Sigmund Freud during the development of psychoanalysis. Anxiety, according to Freud, was the term related to sex. He argued that anxiety caused by an unsatisfied libido that builds up during sexual intercourse. Further, he returned with the view that anxiety is the result of repression. Finally, in the late 1920s, Freud proceeded to offer a new and quite different explanation of anxiety. He

proposed that anxiety is part of the ego's response as a warning of an imminent danger situation so that defensive strategy emerges to avoid it.

Defense mechanisms was proposed by Sigmund Freud with the term "defense" as a form of the ego's struggle to repress painful and unbearable affects. Later, Freud replaced it with the new term "repression". However, after several times, he continued to use the term "defense" and characterized repression as a method of defense (A. Freud, 1993). The function of ego's person is to face and to deal with every dangers and threats in reality which would cause anxiety. Further, person try to overcome his anxiety by employing a defense mechanism. It is an ego's strategy used to overcome anxiety by denying, falsifying, or distorting the reality of the danger at hand (Hall, 1961).

The writer considered *Short Term 12* as an object of the study due to several reasons. First, the film has an interesting story about teenagers struggling with their own problems. *Short Term 12* is adapted from film director's experience working in facility's home for troubled teens. Second, the writer saw the story is simple but seems very realistic. The storyline is easy to understand and able to convey the message very well. Third, the writer looked at the issue of anxiety depicted in the film. Many researchers raised the topic of anxiety through films or novels, but the writer found no researchers who have conducted the study through *Short Term 12* film using this topic. Last, as the first film analyzed using the topic of anxiety, it is hoped that the study can avoid plagiarisms.

Considering the anxiety as the issue that is very vulnerable experiencing by everyone and becomes interesting topic raised in the film, the writer tries to analyse the anxiety experiencing by the characters and the use of defense mechanisms to reduce the anxiety in *Short Term 12* (2013). This study is conducted under the title "**Anxiety and Defense Mechanism Depicted in the Characters of *Short Term 12* (2013): Psychoanalytic Approach**".

B. Problem Statement of the Study

Based on the explanation of the study background, the problem statement can be structured as follows:

1. What are anxiety and defense mechanisms in Freud's Psychoanalytic theory?
2. Why do the characters experience anxiety in the film *Short Term 12* (2013)?
3. How do the characters use defense mechanisms to overcome their anxiety in the film *Short Term 12* (2013)?

C. Objectives of the Study

After formulating the problem, the objectives can be structured as follows:

1. To explain anxiety and defense mechanisms in Freud's Psychoanalytic theory
2. To identify the causes of characters' anxiety in the film *Short Term 12* (2013)
3. To describe how the characters use defense mechanisms to overcome their anxiety in the film *Short Term 12* (2013)

D. Significances of the Study

By analyzing *Short Term 12* movie, the readers are expected to benefit both theoretically and practically

1. Theoretically

The result of this study is expected to increase the development of the knowledge, and to become an academic reference by other researchers in conducting further research and particularly through *Short Term 12* (2013).

2. Practically

- a. The study is expected to become references and information for the researchers, especially for student of English Education to increase their knowledge in analyzing movie, particularly *Short Term 12* (2013) film using Psychoanalytic approach.
- b. The writer hopes the readers get the novelty for analyzing the other issue through *Short Term 12* (2013).